

Accessibility Subgroup
Meeting Notes
Vote Indiana Team
April 25, 2003

Members Present: Suellen Jackson-Boner, Col. Joe Ryan, Nick Rhoad, Dick Dodge, Secretary of State Todd Rokita, Dee Ann Hart Facilitator: Anita Kolkmeier

Others present: Julia Vaughn (Count Us In), Nate Feltman

The subgroup received a revised schedule for the remaining meetings. It was noted that this was the last meeting of the accessibility subgroup.

Secretary Rokita made special note of the loss of State Representative Roland Stine. A driver suspected of driving while under the influence killed Rep. Stine in a car accident last night. Rep. Stine was the ranking minority member to House Elections. Todd indicated that Rep. Stine advocated election reforms in a positive and fair manner and requested members keep Rep. Stine and his family in their thoughts and prayers.

Secretary Rokita asked for the group to submit names and contact information of interested parties to submit the plan to for comment. Dick Dodge mentioned that Cities and Towns should be an interested party. Suellen also suggested posting the plan on the SOS website. Todd then asked Vote Indiana Team members and audience members to consider being pollworkers for the upcoming Primary Election, May 6th.

There were no corrections or additions to the minutes from April 4, 2003. Suellen Jackson-Boner gave an update on the survey. She is putting together a group including members of the Vote Indiana Team and other members of the disability community to work on the survey. Julia Vaughn is collecting surveys to distribute to the group. They will meet Friday, May 2, 2003 to consider all the surveys and discuss what will work for Indiana. Julia also talked to a firm in North Carolina that develops software which grades the polling place and determines what it would take to make it accessible. This development is possibly a cheaper method to complete the survey, but it is not completed at this time.

Suellen mentioned that she wanted to send out a letter from the Governor's Planning Council and Secretary Rokita to recruit individuals from the disability community. From the letter, she wants to get a list of individuals who are committed to helping and being involved with the election process.

Julia discussed the opportunity to receive money from HHS. She said the process of the distribution has not yet been clearly set forth, but was informed that the money may be disbursed on voter population per county, giving small counties very little help. Dick reminded the group that county clerks need to submit their budget in June so they probably need information on this process very soon.

Col. Ryan had a discussion with the political science department from Ball State regarding completing the surveys. They seemed very interested and it was left that someone would get back to them when we knew more. Col. Ryan suggested drafting a letter laying out what needs to be done (who, what, when and where information).

Suellen said that the City and Towns newsletter would be a good way to get information out to the counties regarding the HHS grants. Also the Association of Indiana Counties would be another good outlet. **Anita will find out when the next newsletter is for both organizations. Dick is to get Anita contact information for both.** Deeann mentioned using public community television to get the word out about the HHS grants and other HAVA information. Dick also brought in an article from an Arkansas paper with the headline that the state had just received their initial payment of the HAVA funds. The group agreed this was a good idea to let the communities know that we were receiving money and that there were other opportunities to apply for federal funds through the HHS. Nick said that his prosthetist has a mobile office that travels across the state and **he could check with him to see if he would distribute information.** Suellen said that she is willing to distribute the Bill of Rights in her newsletter. **Anita will get Suellen the text version and try to make text larger.**

The subgroup discussed concerns with the definition of polling place. Julia said that SB 477 defined polling place and required the path of travel to be accessible. Suellen reminded the group that ADA accessible covers everything that implies accessibility. The training of poll workers just needs to make specific reference to accessibility. The group also thought that path of travel and equipment accessibility could be added to the plan.

Suellen asked about the identification issue that was in the initial draft of the plan but is not a requirement of HAVA. Deeann thought that showing identification becomes too time consuming and it may disenfranchise voters who do not have an identification or have it with them. Dick also thought that it would slow the process down. Deeann said that when you register you are already showing identification and you are verifying if information is correct when you vote. Col. Ryan said that the key word was verifying. He did not think that it was degrading to show identification. Nick said that it should not be a source of anxiety and it should be presented as a good thing. Deeann compared it to standing in line at a grocery store and waiting for someone to dig out their identification or money. Col. Ryan suggested using a placard to inform them in advance. **Anita is to check on the legality of requiring identification at this time since it is not required by HAVA.**

Julia questioned a statement in the plan regarding counties contracting with private building. She questioned whether that was true. **Anita is to check that fact.**

Col. Ryan discussed the military voting by electronic transmission. He said that the Department of Defense drafts a manual that applies to all states. He also distributed 2 documents for the record: "Appendix C Electronic Transmission of Election Materials" and part of the "2002-2003 Voting Assistance Guide"

Nick noted that under current law each county is supposed to have one polling site that is ADA accessible. He said that for the counties that we do not have enough money to make all sites

accessible, we must make sure that site is accessible. Deeann also pointed out that because you can vote at courthouse prior to election day, the county courthouse should be accessible.

The group also discussed the opportunity to have electronic voting as another avenue for the disability community. However, several members of the committee agreed that electronic voting could be one choice but voting in person must be also be a choice because that is their right. Julia said that she believes that fraud caused by electronic voting is the concern for election administrators, but in the future more choices are good. Col. Ryan said that secure email is there but it is limited. Deeann said that she wanted to be able to vote just as everyone else does and that is why we have the ADA.

The group questioned whether electronic voting would increase voter participation which is the ultimate goal.

The group also discussed public comment and thought that it was a good idea to have satellite spots for those to express their opinion. Julia described the teleconference public comment that was used by the Bipartisan Taskforce on Election Integrity which she thought worked very well. Deeann also pointed out that if publicized in advance, we could require comments to be in writing in order to be forwarded on.